

OCT 31 1932

rams : { Mosque, Woking.
 { "Islam, Lahore."

The

Telephone : Woking
 679.

Islamic Review

Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

XX.]

[No. 10]

JAMĀDA L' UKHRĀ, 1351 A.H.

OCTOBER, 1932 A.C.

ial Subscription 10s.

Single Copy 1

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(Incorporating the Islamic Review, The Muslim Literary Trust, The Basheer Muslim Library and The Isha'at-i-Islam).

Head Office:

AZEEZ MANZIL, Brandreth Road, Lahore, India.

Office in England:

THE MOSQUE, Woking, Surrey, England.

Bankers: LLOYDS BANK LTD., Lahore, India, BARCLAY'S BANK, LTD., Woking

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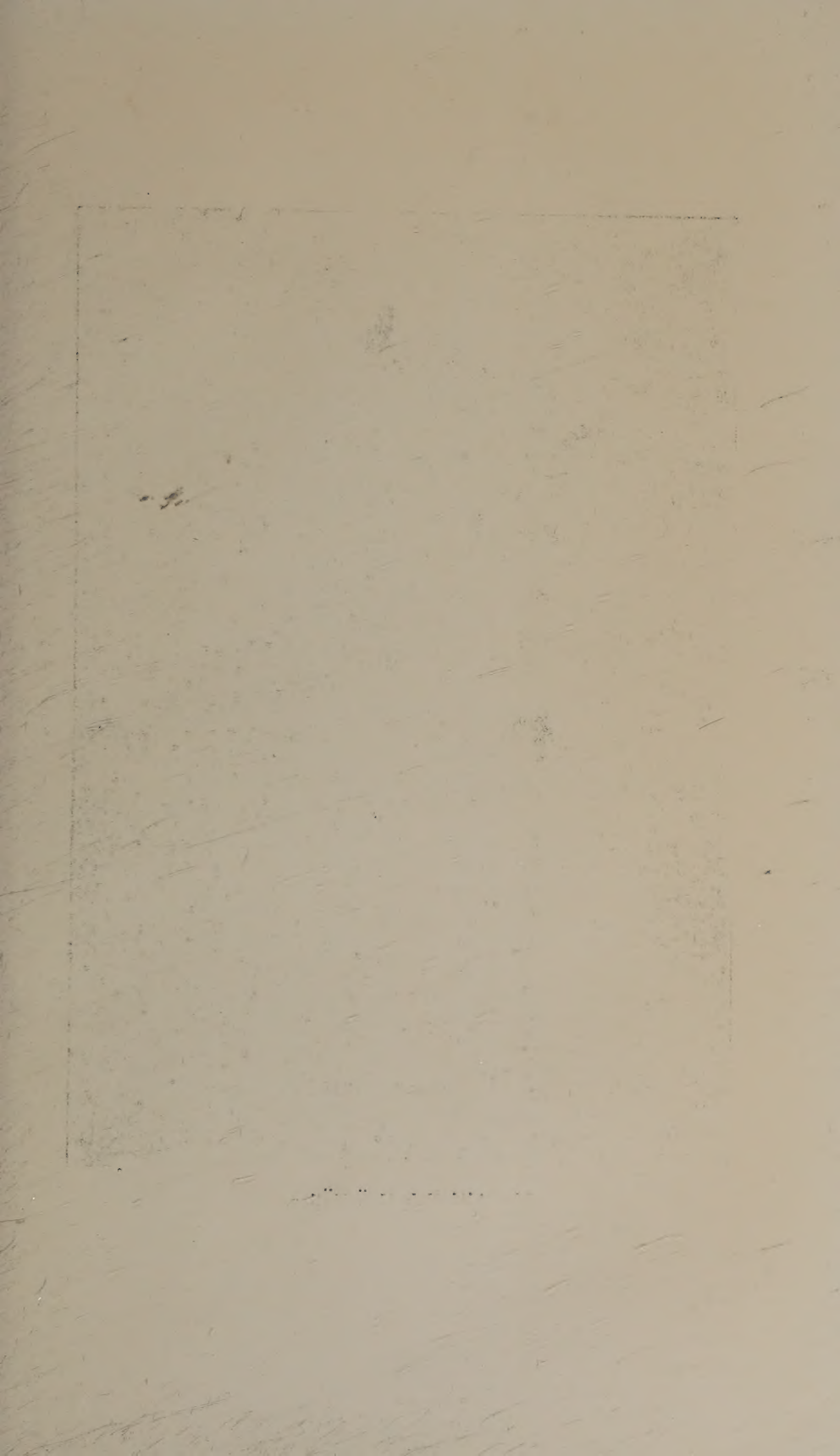
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Mr. Abdullah Unö Küller.

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نُصَدِّقُكَ عَلَى سُبُلِ الْإِيمَانِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

JAMĀDA L'UKHRĀ, 1351 A.H.

VOL. XX.

OCTOBER, 1932 A.C.

No. 10.

GOD'S UNITY AND HIS ATTRIBUTIVE NAMES.

BY SHAIKH MUSHIR HUSSAIN KIDWAI OF GADIA.

I am glad to learn from Mr. David Morrison's letter, which has appeared in the *Islamic Review* of August, that he agrees with me that if the Attributive Names of Allah, as given by the Qur-ān, are kept before the eyes of mankind "the result should be the highest form of civilization, for they contain all that is desirable on any plane of activity." As to the question put by Mr. Morrison: "We have been told that the Qur-ān instilled in man a strong sense of Monotheism, would it not affect our belief in His Unity, if we sought similarity with Him in this respect?" I anticipated all such questions in my article that appeared in the *Islamic Review* of January 1932 under the heading "How to Counter Anti-God Post-war Propaganda?" I said:—

I think a word of warning is also needed to those who ponder over the ninety-nine Names of Allah. They must keep in mind that the Islamic definition of God is *Laisa Kamislihi Shayan*—there is nothing like unto Him. You cannot, therefore, symbolize the Islamic God as you do the Vedic Gods by carved stones, woods, animals; or the elements like fire or water; or planets, like the sun or moon, nor can you anthropomorphise Him or attribute human passions or weaknesses to Him. So you can neither represent God by Jesus or Krishna, nor can you attribute sons or daughters to Him.

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It is open to every man and every woman to take lessons from the Attributes of God but none can assail His Unity. He Himself has created in every man and woman the capability of becoming *Rahim*, merciful, but none can become *Al-Rahim*—The Merciful. There will always remain the difference of degree. Perfection is reserved only for Him. Thousands of things have been invented by man but the absolute Unity of *Badi-us-Samavát val Arz*: “Wonderful Originator of the Heavens and the Earth,” remains unapproached.

In one small chapter The Last Testament, the Holy Qur-án, has given four distinctive attributes of God thus : *Qul Howallaho Ahad, Allahus Samad, lam yalid wa lam-yulad, wa lam yakun lahu kufowan ahad*: “Say, He, Allah, is one. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him.”

His nature as given in the Qur-án is : *La tudrikohul-absar wa Howa yudrikul absar*: “Vision comprehends Him not and He comprehends all vision.”

How can any created thing, even if it be His own masterpiece, claim similarity with Him whose Likeness is inconceivable ?

Yet so wonderfully beautiful is the Islamic conception of God that it satisfies a philosopher, a scientist, a materialist and a spiritualist. It does not only satisfy the cravings of a worshipful heart, but it also satisfies a rational brain and, to quote Mr. Morrison again, makes “Religion the best recipe for a successful life.” It has been well said :—

Mardáne Khuda Khuda na bashand,

Lekin zi Khuda juda na bashand.

“God men are not God incarnates,

But they are not far away from God.”

SATAN : A MORAL NECESSITY.

Islamic conception of God elevates human character to its highest level and makes him a noble citizen of even the most civilised country in this world. Let every thoughtful man ponder over the Attributive Names of Allah as given in the Qur-án with all their implications, and the means to end these quarrels which disturb human brotherhood will be not impossible to find.

The Islamic belief in God is beneficial and helpful in our daily life in this world. If we believe in God it will be for our good. Success will attend us and popularity among our fellow-men will be ours.

SATAN : A MORAL NECESSITY.

BY K. KUDOS.

The world is full of antitheses because the process of creation and growth depends upon factors widely different. It begins to function when things of a conflicting nature come into contact with each other. Everything is potentially good, but its kernel remains concealed, as it were, until it encounters something of a contrary nature to strike it free from its environments. The baser of its two ingredients in every combination consumes the dross of the higher and thereby reveals the kernel. There is always a great struggle in process between the baser and the superior, and vitality results from making the superior immune from all further mishaps. By way of illustration I would instance the struggle going on in man's system to keep him alive. Nature has placed in our body an army of white cells, whose activities create in us the vitality which in the long run produces what medical science terms immunity against all factors of ill-health. The white cells are naturally sluggish, and to arouse them the introduction of some foreign element is needed. Toxins or poisons generally are introduced into our system from outside. The white cells at once begin to work against them, and

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the struggle increases their activity to such an extent as to create vitality. It improves our health, and if we set about attaining that object by the strict observance of hygienic laws we get the same result. The toxins then fail to affect the body. They become a sort of food for the white cells and tend to produce the said Immunity. If some extraneous poisonous matter must come into our body to make it healthy and keep it free from disease, we also need some poison on the moral plane to make us immune from sin. I do not say this by way of analogy because analogy is not always sound logic. I speak of the consistency of the law which pervades Nature. All laws of creation and growth work in the same way. They may assume the form of the particular matter in which they have to work—mineral, vegetable, animal or human—but the laws are the same. For example, things are born out of nothing; they are of very small size at their birth; they then grow gradually and reach maturity. When they have reached this stage they begin to decay and eventually become extinct. Similarly, toxins must appear on the moral plane to struggle with the principles of goodness and render them active. As the moral plane is the plane of consciousness, all its workers must possess cognition as distinct from passions. Our evil emotions cannot, therefore, in themselves, provide the moral poison for they would have to be possessed of knowledge—the knowledge of those passions which we are invited to abuse. If the body gives rise to a spirit in our system whose health depends on the exercise of good morals, some evil spirit is surely needed to remove all sluggishness from it. The evil one has been called Satan in religion. We do need his existence. He must work on wrong lines to keep the spirit of goodness ever active. Just as in Nature things become energetic when facing their antagonists, so do we need some enemy to arouse our moral forces which

SATAN : A MORAL NECESSITY.

otherwise would remain dormant. Thus Satan clearly ranks on the moral plane with the toxins of the physical plane. We find in the Qur-án the same functions assigned to him as are allotted to toxins in the physical kingdom. Like them he introduces himself within us from outside. He acts as an enemy, and weakens our sense of morality and tries to destroy it. But if our moral nature asserts itself strongly enough and we follow the laws of God we become immune from all sin. The Devil, then, like toxins, subserves a moral end. The two poisons, I mean toxins and Satan, assail our health and spirit on identical lines. Evil works on the same lines as those adopted by Satan according to the description of the Qur-án. They are, indeed, one and the same. The only thing left to decide is whether it is the perversity of our own mind that we call Satan or is it some personality existent in the external world who invites the mind to evil? In other words, is Satan a mere faculty or a being who inspires us to use our faculties for evil? He cannot be a part of our physical nature. If good morals depend on the activity of the spirit, there must be some spirit also to energise it in the struggle. Satan must be the Evil Spirit. There is, however, a further problem, which is to locate Satan. Is he an external entity or something from within that causes evil promptings? The question in fact presents the same difficulty as that which stands in the way of the Theists in the matter of the acceptance of Divine Revelation as coming from without. Inspiration may be good or evil, it has in it nothing of a physical nature. It is a kind of knowledge, and no knowledge is born within us. Knowledge always comes from the outer world, and we receive all our inspiration from things external. So it must be that the Archfiend, the inspirer of all evil, is really an external agent.

(To be continued).

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THE LANGUAGE OF PRAYER.

BY M. A. MAJID, M.A.

The discarding by Mustafa Kemal of Arabic as the language of prayer and the adoption of Turkish has been hailed by the non-Muslim world as a lead to his co-religionists. Will Muslims follow suit? To the superficial observer it might seem they would sooner rather than later. But that shows less than a nodding acquaintance with the heart of Islam. I, for one, am in full sympathy with the object of this reform, but the method adopted by Mustafa Kemal seems to me to be a case of zeal getting the better of judgment.

Arabic is the scriptural language of Islam, and has to be studied by every Muslim who seeks to attain proficiency in religious learning. It commands a prestige and a reverence not to be met with in any other scriptural language. Besides its religious importance, Arabic has knit together the different Muslim nations in a cultural unity which keeps alive and cements their feelings of mutual sympathy and brotherhood. The world knows how real and indissoluble that bond is. The rôle of Arabic has been only an instrumental one, and yet so indispensable as to give the knowledge of it the privilege almost of a fundamental requirement of the faith. The unity of language paves the way to cultural homogeneity. The point is so universally understood and appreciated that I shall be advancing no preposterous claim for Arabic, when I say, that, but for it, the cultural kinship of Muslims the world over would have remained an idle dream. Any language might have done what Arabic has. But, as it happens, to be, to this language of all others is due the welding of so many isolated peoples into an organic unity. The Muslim brotherhood is a notable achievement, and a worthy contribution to the ideal of universal brotherhood, which is more of an accomplish-

THE LANGUAGE OF PRAYER.

ed fact in the Muslim world than in Christendom. The uniformity of medium of prayer cannot be ignored as a bringer about and consolidator of Muslim fraternity.

There is only one tenable ground on which the case for abolition of Arabic as the language of prayer can stand. And that is this : Prayers offered in a language other than one's own are not the prayers that proceed from the heart, but merely mechanical and unintelligent performances. They lack alike spontaneity and feeling. Shakespeare rightly puts into the mouth of his King of Denmark in Hamlet : " Words without thought to heaven never go." It is not for us to deny the justice of this criticism.

But could there be no way of reform more in consonance with our traditions ? Is it not possible to give every Muslim child an elementary grounding in Arabic enough to make his prayers intelligible to him ? In India we used to have the mosque schools which have almost disappeared with the secularisation of education under British rule. And even now parents are not lacking who, alongside of their modern education, regard it as a bounden duty to see that their children acquire a little knowledge of Arabic. Whatever be the disadvantages of Arabic, they are not irremediable, and the case for reform seems positively insipid and unappetising when we consider the advantages for which Arabic has stood and might even now stand.

To a Muslim who tours a Muslim country other than, I shall not say foreign to, his own, the Muezzin's call, heard five times a day from the minaret, is a veritable boon. It makes him conscious of a great spiritual fraternity of which he is a member. It inspires him to gird himself up in the service of his ideals. It broadens his sympathies and elevates him above his primitive "tribal self." The Muslim salutation *Salamun Alaikum* (Peace be

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on you) are two Arabic words, and a talisman which has been found to disarm estrangement, create sympathy and fellow-feeling between the greeters. The same salutation alike for rich and poor, high and low, ensures a democracy in which power cannot rise to tyranny, nor can poverty degenerate into servility. The common use of Arabic words and phrases in every Muslim home, the world over, has gone such a long way to build a homogeneous, international outlook, the life breath of a faith professed by four hundred millions of men, that the reform effected by Mustafa Kemal is a step in the direction not of progress but of retrogression.

If Arabic is discarded, certain forces would be let loose which would in course of time result in distorting and mutilating the face of Islam beyond recognition. The original sources of Islamic study are all Arabic. The Qur-án is in Arabic and so are the most authoritative records of Islamic teaching and history. The Prophet's life, his work and his sayings, all that we rightly reckon as Islam-in-action, can be advantageously studied only in the original Arabic, with none of the inaccuracies that have a curious way of getting into translations.

If the followers of Islam lose touch with Arabic the result then is not difficult to predict. In non-Arabic countries Islam would come to rest on hearsay, or on works of translation at its best. The Qur-án would become the property of the learned and, at a later stage, of the antiquarian. The generality would grow dependent on second-hand expositions.

The language of the Qur-án is classic and the purity of its text unquestioned. Centuries of learned scholarship have preserved its meanings so intact as to place them absolutely beyond the law of flux of languages in accordance with which words come to gain and lose in connotation

THE LANGUAGE OF PRAYER.

with the lapse of time. We understand by *Rahman* and *Rahim* exactly what the Prophet understood. Not a word of the Qur-án can be proved to have altered in meaning as words commonly do in the growth of languages.

If every Muslim nation were to follow the example of Turkey and come wholly to depend for its knowledge and practise of Islam on its own native translations and commentaries, the day will not be far off when it will have sacrificed its dearly cherished ideals and conceptions by trusting their expression to languages, infant and undeveloped, subject to the aforesaid law of flux, and certainly not capable of that trust. Cultural disintegration, leading by stages to complete religious amnesia, will be the only logical result of banishing Arabic from the service of Islam. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures have a woeful tale to tell of the havoc that their translations have made. Let that be a warning to the Muslim world.

We cannot regard the Turkish President's reform as a *fait accompli*. How far his nation bears with him remains yet to be seen. Once the flush of revolutionary zeal is over, who knows Turkey may have to retrace her steps in more than one direction.



THE HOLY QUR-ÂN AND ITS COMMENTARY.

INTRODUCTION.

BY KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

(Continued from Vol. XX, page 302.)

CHAPTER V.

HELL AND HEAVEN.

The Holy Qur-ân, when speaking of Heaven, says that it is like the heavens and the earth in its vastness.¹ When the Holy Prophet was speaking about this verse to his companions there chanced to be present an Ambassador from the Roman Emperor Heraclius, who observed that if Heaven were so extensive, it would hardly leave any room for Hell—a remark very much to the point. But the reply was more than equal to it “God be glorified,” said the Holy Prophet, “where is the night when the day comes?” This may not be appreciated by those who imagine the universe to be a three-storyed house, with our earth as the middle one. But the Qur-ânic verse and the Holy Prophet’s comment thereon explains the whole thing on a scientific basis. It is the earthly matter in us which gravitates us towards the planet. The moment we lose such matter we depart from it, as, indeed, we find in the case of birds. If death consists in the separation of the spirit from the body, the former cannot remain attached to the earth without its physical clothing. But since low passions are a rarefied form of earthly matter, the spirit, if filled with such passions, cannot go beyond certain regions in the adjoining space, and, like a toy balloon filled with gas, cannot ascend beyond a certain height. As long as there are earthly passions in us, we shall have to remain hover-

¹ 26 : 90, 50 : 31.

INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÁN.

ing in a place called Hell. The doors of Heaven will be opened to us only when we are purged of all carnal desires. We may have any substance for our body, it will be much lighter than the clay out of which we are now fashioned. That body, indeed, may be of electrons or of light itself, as we read in the Qur-án. Supposing we could visualise a species of balloon, made of electrical matter with a man sitting in it whose body itself was made of the same substance with various devices for eating and drinking, but all of the same substance, it would be an easy matter for the person in the balloon to move throughout the whole space of the universe with electric rapidity. A similar description has been given by the Holy Prophet of our movements in the heavens.

As to the pleasures of Heaven, we may enjoy them in the same way as we enjoy our pleasures on earth. But since our various organs, our tastes, digestion and the rest, will not be the product of earth, the things for our enjoyment in Heaven cannot be of earthly nature. I am neither exaggerating nor inventing when I say that I have known Muslim gentlemen of rare piety who at times used to enjoy the delicious flavour and taste of several fruits without actually eating any. Men of that character sometime hear the loveliest music, the most bewitching songs, when none actually is being played. I know of another friend, who once had a novel experience. He was neither dreaming nor in a trance, but he was quite wide-awake sitting meditating at midnight. He felt as if he was in the company of a woman and appreciated her company. The Qur-án has also referred to this when it says that the inmates of Heaven when given a portion of the fruit thereof shall say: "This is what was given to us before; they shall *be given the like of it.*"¹ The italicised words most eloquently explain that the pleasures of Heaven will

¹ 1 : 2.

be like those we enjoy here, but not of the same nature. There is another similar statement in Chapter 76 which tells of the various pleasures which we shall enjoy in Heaven. Now, for example, camphor is the best of antiseptics, and the Book, after mentioning the condition of the sinners in Hell, speaks of the righteous who drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor."¹ After a patient's bowels have been thoroughly purged he needs an antiseptic because he has still germs of putrefaction in his system. After he is fully relieved he requires a tonic. Ginger, they say, is one of the finest invigorating medicines; so we read in the same Chapter that the inmates of Heaven will be given to drink "a cup the admixture of which shall be of ginger."²

We need nourishment wherever we may be, and if we perceive the nourishing value of those fruits, the namesakes of which will be given us in Heaven, it shows that they are invigorating and stimulating especially in cases of heart weakness. If the heart is the seat of the mind then it must have in the heavenly regions similar food like that which is beneficial on earth.

The Holy Qur-án thus also explains many other aspects of this subject, nourishment in Heaven and Hell being one of them. Everything is to be nourished, but its nourishment is derived from the same substance as that which gives it its body. If, on our death, we have to leave our bodies behind us, then we cannot naturally assimilate anything of the earth by way of nutrition. But since the mind of the sinner, at his resurrection, will long for earthly things, these hankerings will of themselves place him in torment on account of their absence in those regions. He will feel that he is forbidden the very things which he used to enjoy on earth. On the other hand, he will be interested in the heavenly food, because he will find some

¹ 2 : 75.

² 76 : 17.

INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÁN.

of his friends there enjoying it. If he asks them to share their delicacies with him, and if they refuse, it will be all too natural.¹ The verse further explains the stuff of which the food will be prepared. It will be light. Our bodies will be made of light, for otherwise we would not be able to assimilate any articles made of light. This takes us a step further. Charcoal has within it various gems of light, and a stage comes when every piece of coal becomes all light. But before reaching that brilliant state, every particle of soot and smoke must be consumed. It must also go through fire to get the brilliance which is innate in it. It is just the same with us. We come fully from light, as I have explained elsewhere. That light became denser and denser until, eventually, it assumed the form of the earth which brought forth man as its best product. From this condition we enter upon a sort of backward journey for we have to return to the same condition of light, so it is not surprising if a case hardened mind, full of metaphorical soot and smoke, is thrown into a pit of fire. But he must live on something and that something is, as the Qur-án says, the fruit of a tree called *Zaqqum*.

The tree of *Zaqqum*² has been mentioned in the Qur-án as growing at the bottom of Hell. Its fruit, it is said, will be the food of the sinful. It will boil in their bellies. They will be thirsty and run for water³ and they will be given boiling water to drink.² The very description shows that the fruit would act as an aperient medicine. A Muslim divine, who was also an experienced physician, treated a syphilitic patient with a fruit of the same name which grows in India. The patient felt hot and the physician gave him hot water which caused a violent evacuation of the bowels. Motion after motion came bringing out black deleterious matter from his stomach, and the patient

¹ 57 : 13.

² 37 : 64.

³ 64 : 43—46.

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was relieved. The Holy Qur-án suggested the idea to the physician, and he used to apply it in all serious cases. I read of another similarity between hospital and Hell as given in the Qur-án. When a patient is admitted into a hospital he is often accompanied by his friends ; but if he is under treatment for some very serious disease, no visitor is allowed to see him. A sort of a wall, a barrier, as it were, is placed between him and those who are in good health. He does not see them again unless and until he is fully cured. His friends may come to enquire after him, but they are not allowed to see him. So we read in the Qur-án, when it speaks of a wall raised between the hypocrite and the believer,¹ separating the two, each from the other. The Holy Book speaks also about the duration of Heaven and Hell.² Heaven, it says, is an everlasting gift that will never be cut off.³ It establishes the eternity of Heaven, but, as Hell is only a purifying entity, it cannot exist if there are no impurities of wrong inclinations to be got rid of. It must exist as long as the two things exist ; because no one can enter Heaven unless he has a pure spirit. These impurities are no other than the earthly passions in us which, in their uncontrolled condition, are the cause of wrong-doing during our earthly sojourn. We may not have any occasion to do more sins after our death for lack of means, but the inclination to do so will subsist in us as long as these passions survive. They are a kind of barrier between the sinner and the heavenly abode, which, indirectly, give rise to Hell. If we commit sin, it is on account of these inclinations which emanate therefrom ; and if we continue to feel the said inclination after death, it is for the same reason. These passions, in their uncleansed form, even after death, must tend towards earth for their satisfaction. They will exist as long as the earth exists, and will create a

¹ 57 : 13.

² 11 : 87.

³ 11 : 108.

INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÂN.

hankering in us to return to the terrestrial sphere, but we shall not be able to gratify them for want of a physical body, the necessary wherewithal of earthly life, for the body is left behind on our death and reduced to its elements. This inability will act as a second barrier between our inclinations and the means to satisfy them.¹ A sinner will thus have two barriers, one before him and the other behind him. The struggle between the tendency and the inability to satisfy it will surely create a new hell for a sinner, which must co-exist with the earth, and would naturally come to an end if our planet were to be destroyed. We read in the Qur-ân of a calamity which will be the end of the earth. The Book speaks of some terrible concussion that will shatter it to pieces, and make the mountains, which were created to keep the earth steady, like unto loosened wool² with the men on it scattered like moths in space.³ The calamity will be in the nature of a collision of the earth with some larger heavenly body, as science also says when discussing the possible fate of our planet. If Hell be co-existent with the earth, it must disappear with it. But we read of a third thing co-existing with Hell. The Book, when speaking of sinners in Hell, says, they will abide therein so long as the heaven and the earth endure. This statement, however, makes no difference to my point of view. The Arabic words, *Ard* and *Samawat*, which correspond to the English words the *earth* and the *heavens*, respectively, do not literally mean the earth and the heavens. Their primary meaning refer rather to the position they occupy in space than to the substance of which they are made. *Ard* in Arabic means anything that stands below another thing, while *Sama* means height. The two words are thus relative, so much so, that the first of the seven heavens may be called *Ard*⁴ of the second

¹ 34 : 54. ² 101 : 5. ³ 101 : 104.

⁴ Imam Raghib in his dictionary of the roots of the words in the Qur-ân.

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heaven. Similarly the second may be termed *Ard* in relation to the third. It shows that though the regions, here called *Samawat*, of the heavens may survive the extinction of the earth, yet they will not be called by their present names. If the demolition of the earth will make an end of Hell the word *Samawat* will no longer be applied to the regions now so-called. There is, however, another word in the verse under discussion which gives rise to a misconception as to the duration of Hell, and that word is *Abad*, which has been wrongly interpreted as *eternity*. But *abad* has *abad* as its plural, while the idea of eternity cannot admit of plurality. Eternity is one indivisible thing. Therefore, the word *Abad* only means a very long period. The existence of Hell cannot be ascribed to any Divine revenge or to the passion of an "angered deity." The Qur-án absolutely denies any such reason. It says that God is not interested in any way in punishing us.¹ But as we have not used His gifts aright, and therefore remain unfit for further progress, we are sent to Hell for the removal of all that retards our progress in the coming life.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN.

THE IMAM,

The Mosque, Woking,

DEAR BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

In the year 1928 I went to Tunis as a tourist and during my stay I became very much impressed by the charming manners of the Arabs, I made many friends among them, and desired to learn the Arabic language. One of my friends began to give me lessons in Arabic. But I had scarcely had two lessons when I asked my friend a few questions about Islam. From that day on the Arabic lessons turned into lessons in the Islamic religion. I found that Islam was the only religion that could claim to be the revealed word of Allah. I must also mention that while studying Islam I was given a copy of Mr. Muhammad Ali's translation of the Holy Qur-án. Then

¹ 4: 147.

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Islamic Review came into my hands also. Thus it was that I became a Muslim. My Christian friends were much annoyed, but I was ready to give up every thing for Islam, the only true religion.

I learn that Mr. Mohammad Ali's translation is going to be rendered into German. I hope it will not be long before we have it translated into Swedish also. It is necessary to make our beautiful religion known to the Scandinavian people. May God grant us victory, and may that day come soon when we shall have a Mosque in Stockholm.

Yours in Islam,
ABDULLAH UNÖ KÜLLER.

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

HUNGARY.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

I hope you will forgive me for addressing you without any previous introduction. But perhaps I don't need any. I think, to begin with, I should tell you something about myself.

I am born of an English mother, though an Hungarian by parentage and nationality. I have been going over to England with my aged mother to see her people now and again. During my last visit to London, on a particular morning, I had nothing to do, and so to pass my time I walked into the Central Library, High Street, East Ham. Looking back on it I thank God for the incident, for while hunting for something interesting to read I came across your Journal on the table. It struck me as being odd, and I began to glance through it. One of the articles therein dealt with the problem of the Existence of Evil. I may mention here that I was then a Roman Catholic priest. The article set me thinking, and, when I discussed it with a member of the Church Missionary Society, I was given to understand that it was "tabboo." Not satisfied I went back to the Library and took down the address and name of certain publications advertised therein. Consequently, I ordered them through an agency and obtained: "The Ideal Prophet," "The Sources of Christianity" and Mr. Muhammad Ali's translation of the Holy Qur-án.

"The Sources of Christianity" dealt with a subject already familiar to me, but the manner in which the subject was handled was rather new. It took me some months to get through these and other books of yours which I had also obtained. The one book, however, which I have read, apart from the Qur-án, more than once is "The Ideal Prophet." The one thing which appealed to me the most was the manly character of Muhammad, the Hero Prophet of Carlyle—the true ideal whom I as a man could follow and become at one with the Lord. As a contrast to the Biblical Christ I discovered, for my guidance, a practical man, one like myself, and yet

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so noble, so high, so sublime that with my Catholic instinct I could prostrate myself and worship him but for the fact that it has been ordained that there is none worthy of adoration but the One God.

Brought up, as I was, in a true Christian atmosphere, I could hardly get over the Christian prejudices against Islam. I could not still separate Islam from the Sword. But a study of your work, "The House Divided" and "The Spirit of Islam" by Mr. Ameer Ali satisfied my qualms, for always I turned back to the translation of the Qur-án for verification.

A time came when I began to be uneasy. People would come to me for confessions of their sins, and I not only began to realize the folly of it all, but also began to feel an hypocrite myself, nay, not only this but my eyes were opened to the hypocritical conduct of the founders of the Catholic Church. It became an obsession with me, and I had to resign. I then felt like a freedman who had come out of his bondage, a slave whose shackles had been broken and I was happy. But this happiness was only superficial for I was really discontented at my heart. I prayed fervently to the Almighty to show me the way, for I had obstacles in my way in accepting Islam. One morning, during the early hours, while still at prayers, I heard a call. I could not understand it, but somehow I knew that the moment had come. I sat down to read the Qur-án, and the first verse which came before my eyes was : "The religion with Allah is Islam."

There and then I knelt down in the presence of my Creator and solemnly repeated the formula of Faith :—

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger."

I cannot describe my feelings at that moment. They were mingled with joy and sorrow, and like a child I began to cry ; for at once a conflict between my duty to my God, and my duty to my aged mother started within me. I knew that the moment I would tell my mother, who is still a staunch Catholic, of my change of faith she would be displeased, perhaps shocked, and of one thing I was certain that she would never forgive me. And yet I had for long lived the life of an hypocrite, and I wanted to proclaim my faith in Islam to all.

The object of this rather a lengthy letter is to seek your advice. I want you to pray for me and to ask my brothers in faith to pray for me. I want to do my duty to God, and yet I cannot offend the feelings of my aged mother, at whose feet, according to the Holy Prophet, lies my Paradise. She is already very much upset at my resignation.

You may if you like publish this letter, but you will appreciate my reasons for requesting you to withhold my name for the present. I enclose my card.

Yours fraternally,
A. H. G.

DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE REFORM

BY THE RT. HON'BLE LORD SALVESEN, P.C., K.C., LL.D.

(Continued from Vol. XX, page 318.)

At the present day the main opposition to an extension of the existing ground of divorce comes from the Roman Catholic Church, and from a certain proportion of the priesthood of the Church of England. The former Church is inflexible in its opposition to the dissolution of any marriage celebrated in church, whilst the priesthood of the Anglican Church is divided. The opposition is founded on the alleged sacramental character of marriage, a view which is not shared by the majority of the lay population belonging to the Church of England, nor by the large body who constitute the remainder of the Protestant population. For the first seven centuries of Christian faith divorces were allowed on various grounds. It was not until the eighth century that the doctrine of marriage, being a sacrament, was incorporated in the law of Christian States. It spread all over the countries subjected to the Western Church and finally received the solemn sanction of the Roman Catholic Church by the decree of the Council of Trent. Anyone who reads the history of that council in the article published in the British Encyclopedia will not be favourably impressed by the authority of that council, especially those who are not prepared to submit to this infallible rule of the Pope. The Anglo-Catholic clergy of the Church of England rely for authority especially on the words of our Lord : " Whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder." It is not consistent with my conception of the Deity that he is responsible for every ill-assorted marriage. If what is meant is " Whom the Church hath joined let no man divorce," it is really an assertion that every marriage celebrated in church should be assumed to be an act of the Deity. It is dangerous to take too literally the words of a great moral teacher. If we did, we should find our-

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selves in great difficulties. In the Sermon on the Mount one finds the words : " Judge not that ye be not judged," which, if literally interpreted, would abolish all courts of justice.

Again, what warrant is there for interpreting the words "put asunder" as meaning divorce and not separation? The Roman Church has always recognized the right of a spouse to be separated from another on the ground of infidelity and on other grounds. The decree of separation sunders as effectually the relationship between husband and wife as a decree of divorce. From a legal point of view, apart from authority and tradition, the matter is scarcely open to argument. It is mere assertion to say, even if the words were construed as one would a statute, that our Lord meant separation and not divorce, for divorce is expressly sanctioned elsewhere for fornication. Taken literally and by themselves the words prohibit both.

Before the Commission, some thirty persons representative of all branches of the Christian Church in the United Kingdom, gave evidence. Some leading Anglican clerics expressed the view that marriage was a sacrament, and that marriages were therefore indissoluble, although this does not necessarily seem to follow. Some went so far as to regard an innocent person who had divorced his wife or husband, as the case might be, as guilty of adultery if he or she entered into a second marriage. As I understand their evidence, they would refuse to perform the marriage ceremony in such a case, and they would also refuse to receive a person, who had married a second time after divorcing a guilty spouse, into communion. This attitude appears to be more unforgiving than the Founder of the Christian religion took up towards the woman taken in adultery—which might well be kept in view by those who profess His religion. Representatives of even Presbyterian churches differed

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fundamentally as to the proper construction, or application, of the words of Christ. The general conclusion of the Majority Report is thus expressed :—

The result is that we are unable to find any general consensus of Christian opinion, which would exclude any of the questions stated above from being freely considered. In view of the conflict of opinion which has existed in all ages and in all branches of the Christian Church, amongst scholars and divines equally qualified to judge, and the fact that the State must deal with all its citizens, whether Christian, nominally Christian, or non-Christian, our conclusion is that we must proceed to recommend the Legislature to act upon an unfettered consideration of what is best for the interest of the state, society and morality, and for that of parties to suits and their families.

The Report also states that theological differences had weighed little with the great mass of the lay witnesses, and that amongst those “ who feel them there are great differences of opinion. With few exceptions the lay witnesses pass them by, as if they concerned theologians rather than practical legislation.” In the early Christian Church under the Western and Eastern Emperors there were the same acute differences of opinion on the theological aspect, but the legislation of the day permitted divorce, not merely for infidelity but for many other causes.

While the Roman Catholic Church, since the eighth century, has more or less consistently maintained that marriage was indissoluble, various devices have been resorted to for putting to an end the marriage tie on the ground of the invalidity of the marriage itself, even when contracted in the Church. In his “ Mediæval Church in Scotland ” Bishop Dowden, who was the Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh, describes the state of matters immediately preceding the Reformation :—

A man might be living happily in wedlock for a score of years before some accident revealed to him that his reputed wife was a third cousin, and therefore no real wife in the eye of the Church, and that his children were illegitimate. But the doctrine that affinity up to and including the fourth degree was an impediment to marriage vastly increased the uncertainty whether a marriage was valid or not. According to the Church, affinity was created equally by illicit intercourse and by marriage. An act of pre-nuptial unchastity, let us suppose, on the part of the man with a woman related to his future wife in the fourth degree of consanguinity, invalidated his marriage. It was obviously possible for

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a man, by keeping the evil secrets of his early life to himself, to contract a marriage which he would be able at any time to get declared null in the consistorial court. Nor was it always the man who took advantage of the ecclesiastical law in this respect.

The Council of Trent modified to some extent the prohibition of intermarriage, but on the evidence of Monsigneur Moyes, Prelate for the Roman Court, there are still fifteen grounds upon which a marriage can be declared null, even when regularly entered into. Needless to say, only a few of these are recognized by the law of England. Those not so recognized include consanguinity in the third degree, affinity, duress or violence affecting the liberty of the consort, public decorum (if one or other of the parties has been formally betrothed to another), disparity of worship—*e.g.*, the marriage of a Christian and a non-Christian—to mention only a few.

A modern instance of the application of the impediment of duress is that of Miss Vanderbilt, who married the Duke of Marlborough, and, after twenty-five years of married life, divorced him in the American Courts, and subsequently married a retired French officer. Neither of the marriages was celebrated in a Roman Catholic Church, but as the lady wished to enter that communion she brought a suit of annulment before the Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark. He granted the annulment on the ground that the Duchess had been married under compulsion from her family, and not of her own free will. The sacred Roman Rota confirmed his judgment. Of course, in law, the lady had been married quite validly to her second husband, but the Roman Church which she desired to enter considered that she was, in fact, living in adultery if her first marriage was a legal one, and this annulment was the only solution to her being received into their communion. In Catholic countries like Italy, where there is no divorce, recourse is no doubt often had to these fifteen methods of setting aside a marriage, just as in the mediæval times to which Bishop Dowden referred.

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On this question of marriage reform England is, perhaps, the most priest-ridden of all the existing States of Europe, and it is the clergy of her State Church that have proved the chief obstacle to reform. A section of them at present do not even recognize the validity of a decree of divorce obtained on the sole ground of infidelity. This appears to me to be all the more indefensible, as the 39 Articles, which still constitute the creed of the Church of England, expressly negative the view that marriage is to "be conducted as a Sacrament of the Gospel." The 25th Article then proceeds, "There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of our Lord."

Nor, on the other hand, do these priests admit as valid more than a fraction of the fifteen causes on which a marriage can be annulled in those Roman Catholic countries where no divorce is allowed by law. They are even less liberal than the predominantly Catholic country of Austria, which permits divorces as between Protestants on various grounds, although, as between Catholics, it prohibits divorce. Christian communities which are independent of the State can, of course, make any rules they please to regulate the conduct of their own members. Such regulations have no force or effect in law. But it is intolerable that a section of the Church which draws its revenues from the State and is subject to its jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters should refuse to marry couples to whose union there is no legal impediment. I recognize, of course, that you cannot restrain consciences, but it is part of the duty of a parish minister to officiate at marriages which parishioners desire to take place in the parish church.

I am satisfied that a large majority of the laity belonging to the Church of England do not share the view that marriages are indissoluble, nor was this the view of the

Reformers who founded it ; and I feel sure that still fewer of them subscribe to the view that an act which has been sanctioned by the law of the country constitutes a sin, and apparently one which the Church in their view should treat as unforgivable. Even in predominantly Catholic countries divorce is recognized not merely for infidelity, but for other conjugal offences that they consider equally grave. France, Belgium and even Portugal are in this category. It is surely time that England should be brought abreast of all other civilized States, except the two or three which resolutely refuse to sanction divorce, while permitting marriages to be annulled on grounds which Protestants everywhere regard as quite unsubstantial and grossly unjust.

EUROPEAN WRITERS ON ISLAM.

BY DR. MASUD ALI VARESI.

For the first few centuries of Islam, Europe was absolutely incapable of criticising, appreciating or understanding what the Prophet of Islam was or what his religion really meant. Writings of European writers on Islam and the Prophet during the mediæval centuries, however, were distinctly characterized by ignorance and bigotry based on unreliable sources and of disgraceful origin, the sinister creation of some reckless and irresponsible poetic minds. It was due to their indifference, lack of knowledge, and the degenerate condition which they themselves were steeped into that we come across a totally different conception of Islam than what it in reality is. The European nations were, however, overawed by the sweeping conquests of the Muslims. Instead of "There is no God but One," they attributed three integral factors of worship : three Gods in their variation of dignity and purpose as the teachings of the Prophet. This Trinity

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seems to have been based on the dogmas of Christianity itself, in order to represent a hideous contrast between the latter and Islam. The Prophet, to whom there could be nothing more irrational, nefarious and painful than idol worship, was represented to have made it incumbent on his followers to worship his golden image. Strange, facetious, and incongruous as the stories were, and unjust and gruesome fabrications too, they had the blackest net-work of sources of information, for which the authors and their adherents alone were responsible.

During the seventeenth century after Christ (peace be on him), a new intellectual era dawned on Europe. Europe turned over a new leaf, and produced Orientalists who sought for information on the subject from Arabic sources. Arabic texts and translations were published. The chief characteristic of the period was the elimination of the baser element, and there was thus a marked and distinct improvement in the dignity of style of the authors. But nevertheless because of political motives the ultimate product was a grotesque blend of some of the old fictitious legends and of the new thought. The church had almost lost its hold on politics, thereby engendering three different groups of writers on Islam : ordinary writers, religious bigots who painted facts in their own way and light, and some seekers and some pretenders after truth. The "*Arabic*" sources were the works of Christian authors, which were intentionally found to be entertaining enough for translation. During the last stage of the eighteenth century, when the erstwhile glorious Muslim powers were waning and the majority of the Muslims were degenerating themselves, Western political power and influence was strengthening its hold on Islamic countries. This was the time when more Orientalists began to spring up, and encouraged by their Governments, Oriental institutions were opened, libraries on Eastern

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religions and peoples found their existence, Arabic societies were established, and translations of Oriental languages found an appreciable place in Western libraries. Gradually, standard Eastern histories and books were profusely translated, contact between Easterners and Westerners made relations warm and cordial, and various writers of different shades and thought on Islam and the Prophet grew in abundance. The European writers of that period may be classed under three different heads :—

1. Those who were absolutely in dark about the Arabic sources and had to depend on translations. Their main mission was to rear edifices on weak and defective foundations, cemented with their own consummate skill in style and diction.

2. Those who had profound knowledge of Arabic literature, history and philosophy, but knew little of religious literature and the character of the Prophet, which in itself had attained the status of an accomplished art. Such writers made reckless statements about Islam and the Prophet (peace be on him), which would seem to reflect seriously on the trend of their minds from a religious standpoint. They were absolutely ignorant of the subject and had the audacity to pose as authoritative writers.

3. Those who were scholars of Muslim history and Islamic literature but in spite of their profound knowledge and mastery were fettered by prejudice and unfortunately could not see the light of faith as it is. They exerted their fullest intellectual energy and applied their ingenuity with such desperate and deplorable skill as to portray the picture of Islam as if it was something alarming, something different altogether. Here we see the traits of biassed character, and have to assert that faith which is the essence of the whole creation is not the acquisition of those whose hearts and minds have been

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“ Sealed up ” by the Creator Himself. They entertained any form of evidence whatsoever without caring to see whether it was reliable, rational or logical. In fact, they did not like to consider favourably the Qur-án, Hadis (Traditions of the Prophet), nor those writers who had carefully and analytically followed the course of events on authentic, standard and authoritative sources based on the art of *Daráyat* or historical and logical test ; but were always ready to blindly fling calumny and made spurious criticism. They made use of anything, however low and baseless it be, to parade themselves as writers of antagonist's camp, to screen truth and to earn the tribute of *bravado* from their co-religionists.

It is the miracle of Islam that after all, and at last, seekers after truth are one by one arising out of the opposite camp, and time will come when the light of Islam will shine in resplendent faith on the motherland and the fatherland of those who have left no stone unturned to misrepresent Islam and mar its beautiful glories. Thus far for the European writers as a whole.

THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM

The Prophet (peace and blessings of the Allah be on him) owes his descent to Abraham. From Hazrat Ismáíl, the first-born of Abraham to 'Adnán, there were 40 generations. 'Adnán is the ancestor of the Prophet Muhammad (blessings of Allah be on him and his descendants) was born on Monday, the 9th of Rabi'-l-Awwal, corresponding to the 20th of April 571, after Christ (peace be on him). The whole world was grovelling in darkness, Christianity had experienced chaotic revolutions which had shattered its very foundations. The Arabs worshipped idols to seek proximity to God through them. They were barbarous and had sunk low in ignorance and detestable customs, usages and beliefs. Judaism, Christianity,

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Majusi-ism also prevailed, but the worshippers of the Trinity were few in number. There were also a few unitarians who had given up idol-worship. But taking the vast Arab country and the whole world collectively, darkness and ignorance prevailed, and queer were the outstanding features of those days. It was of paramount importance therefore that the world should be blessed with a much-needed change and witness truth and light of faith. Thus, God, the Almighty, fulfilled His covenant and showered His compassion on mankind for all ages to come. For Islam is all morality and law, and deals with every aspect of life from a scientific, social and moral point of view, teaching justice, highmindedness, toleration and the intellectual adjustment of things on plain and simple lines governing the high and the low alike without any contradistinction whatsoever. Everyone is responsible for one's own actions, omissions and commissions. All are brethren of the same community. The religious mandates and ordinances are applicable to all alike. There is no transmission of sins because of the sacrifice of one person for an illogical redemption of the humanity at large. Nor can confession be of any avail. The beggar and the emperor are all alike to Him, and shall be equally accountable at the threshold of the All-powerful. He is One, Self-contained. He begets not nor is begotten. He bears no blood relationship to any one. The Prophet is His creation and His servant like the rest of human beings. To His will and commands all are subject, inasmuch as a particle even cannot move without His will. He is the All-Compassionate, but He is equally the Source of Wrath. Nothing can counterbalance His justice and will. To Him and Him alone each living soul should submit itself in thorough resignation. Life is for Him, and it should be adjusted in thorough consonance with His commands.

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Man has to be in perfect humility to Him and crave for His indulgence and help. He is the Creator of all and unto Him all shall return. This is Islam or Peace, the religion of Muhammad, and it should be the watchword of this ephemeral and uncertain existence, for man's actions shall be weighed and justice meted out accordingly.

The Prophet, who was only a messenger of the Almighty Lord, and who fulfilled his mission in consonance with *Allah's* wishes, has left a permanent legacy to the world wherein no havoc of time has yet been able for centuries to make the slightest conceivable alteration, and which is handed down from generation to generation *ad verbatim*. Read this word of God, the Qur-án, wherein Hell and Paradise are shown to run parallel in accordance with man's actions, and so make your own heaven or hell out of your life. For the Author of this Holy Book is not the Prophet (peace be on him) but the Almighty Himself. The only claim the Prophet has to it is that he was the medium of handing it down to mankind through His wishes for the guidance of the creation. He was the last of all the prophets, and accordingly the religion (Islam) was made perfect by the Almighty, All-Powerful and All-Compassionate Lord through His unbounded love for His creation. Those who demur, they see not the light of faith, those who persist in their denial and are head-strong, their hearts are sealed by Him, and they cannot see what they should see. For them is the promise of a severe chastisement. For those who are righteous, who weep, repent and believe, it is all peace, bliss and everlasting paradise. Therefore, love Him, do as He says, and do not leap to criticise before you think, and, think honestly, conscientiously and soundly well. His will be done. Be just, weigh well, be merciful to the low and the

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poor, be honest, be faithful, be intellectual and do good to please Him, for to Him you have to return one day. Shirk not your duty.

THE PROPHET'S ENCOURAGEMENT OF LEARNING.

BY SYED MUZAFFAR-UD-DIN NADVI, M.A., B.E.S.

Of all religions that have from time to time been preached in the world, Islam alone has made the acquirement of learning incumbent on all its followers, high and low, rich and poor, alike. The attitude of other religions in this respect is anything but satisfactory. Christianity is conspicuously silent on the point, Judaism attaches little importance to learning, Hinduism seeks to confine knowledge to the high caste Brahmins only. Even at the present time, when culture has advanced to a very great extent, many countries are lethargical in the pursuit of knowledge, and their governments are still considering the advisability, or otherwise, of introducing free compulsory education. But the Prophet of Islam, as early as thirteen centuries ago, enjoined free compulsory education upon all his adherents, irrespective of sex and colour, caste or country, when he said, "The search for knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim—male or female." The history of the early Muslims bears eloquent testimony to the fact that they successfully enforced a compulsory system of education throughout the whole Islamic Empire at a period when other nations were shrouded in the darkness of ignorance.

The traditions that have come down to us from the Prophet, touching the urgency and importance of learning are very numerous, and some of them may well be quoted

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here : such as the following :—" Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety ; who speaks of it, praises the Lord ; who seeks it, adores God ; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms ; and who imparts it to its fitting objects performs an act of devotion to God." " Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not ; it lights the way to heaven ; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends ; it guides us to happiness, it sustains us in misery ; it is our ornament in the company of friends ; it serves us as armour against our enemies. With knowledge, the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next." " The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyrs." " He who leaves his home in search of knowledge works in the path of God." " He who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to Paradise."¹

Such sayings, and their number can easily be multiplied, are worthy of being inscribed in letters of gold. From these traditions even the critics of Islam cannot help inferring that the thing which the Prophet has stressed most, after belief in the tenets, is the acquirement of learning.

It is assumed by opponents of Islam that the injunctions commanding the Believers to acquire knowledge are confined only to religious studies, and do not apply to secular research. Such critics may be referred to the tradition which runs :— " Seek learning even unto China." Needless to say that China is only mentioned in

¹. Quoted from the 'Spirit of Islam,' for the original reference may be made to " Bihar-ul-Anwar," " Kashf-uz-Zunun," " Misbah-ush-Shariat " and " Jamil-ul-Akhbar."

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a figurative sense, really meaning thereby something incredibly distant, and that it did not then possess any seat of learning in Islamic studies. In another tradition the Prophet is reported to have said, "Wisdom is the lost property of the Believers," and also, "Gather wisdom, and it will not harm you, whatever pot (source) it has come from." To illustrate these precepts with examples, mention may be made of the fact that the Prophet directed Zaid, son of Thabit (one of the writers of the Divine revelation), to learn Hebrew, with a view to a better understanding of the Jewish activities at Medina. It can be said, to the credit of Zaid, that he devoted himself heart and soul to the learning of Hebrew, and that he mastered within fifteen days.

The student of Islamic history knows that with the rapid spread of Islam far and wide in the early period of the Muslim era, large numbers of people of widely different views and theories were brought into contact with the Muslims. There followed an interchange of ideas, which led ultimately to the study of foreign arts and sciences by the Believers. During the Abbaside period a great number of Greek and Roman books on Philosophy, Logic, Astrology, etc., were rendered into Arabic. Some works were commented on and improved, and others were the subject of criticism, while certain entirely new sciences such as Alchemy and Algebra were unearthed by the Arab genius. From the record of Muslim scholars that has come down to us, it is evident that they employed their brains in the diffusion of all kinds of learning with religious devotion and enthusiasm. Can it be said, therefore, with any justification at all, that these scholars were, in their pursuit of secular knowledge, violating any law of Islam?

The above criticism of the opponents of Islam is, presumably, due to an erroneous impression that the faith of Islam is, like other religions, exclusively spiritual. Such

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persons should note that the Islamic conception of religion is much wider in scope. Islam combines and harmonizes the esoteric and exoteric sides of human life into one undivided and indivisible whole. The two sides are essentially inter-related, so much so that the relaxation of the one or the tightening of the other constitutes a direct negation of the all-pervading spirit of that great religion ; and, taking the above-mentioned conception of religion into consideration, every branch of learning conducive to the progress of our civilization and culture as well as every species of action contributing to our emancipation and happiness, falls within the purview of the religion of Islam, though, in a limited sense of the term, it may appear to be excluded.

Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, whose wide reputation as a great Orientalist rests rather on his deliberate attempt to discredit Islam, by misrepresenting its teachings and quoting unreliable sources like Waqidi, etc., than on his impartial study of that religion, has made much capital out of the tradition in which the Prophet is reported to have forbidden the writing of Hadith. It runs thus : “ Do not write my saying, and he who has written anything else than the Qur-án should efface it. Narrate traditions from me, but do not lie in my name.” From this tradition Professor Margoliouth infers that writing or reading was discouraged by the Prophet ; but with all due deference to him I must say that the Professor, whether by accident or design, has lost sight of other traditions to the effect that the Prophet abrogated his previous order prohibiting the writing of Hadith, and directed his Companions to note down his sayings when necessary.

Masháriq-ul-Anwár, a well-known book on Traditions, says that that part of the tradition which forbids the writing of Hadith was cancelled later on. In the Tradition

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Book of Imam Bukhari we find that Abu Huraira, one of the Companions, and included in the list of Asháb-us-Suffah (men living in the portico of the Mosque) says : " Among the Companions none recollects as many pieces of tradition as I do, Ibn-i-Amar excepted, seeing that he used to note down the sayings of the Prophet, while I did not." ¹

In the Tradition Book of Abu Dawood we read that Abdullah son of Amar (son of 'As) used to note down what he heard from the Prophet. The Quraishites prohibited him from doing so on the ground that the Prophet might be sometimes speaking in anger and in geniality at others. Abdullah son of Amar then discontinued and explained the reason to the Prophet who, then, pointing to his tongue said : " Resume the writing (of my sayings) as whatever comes from this (the tongue) is true." ²

Khatib of Baghdad observes in his book ; " When people thronged to Anas son of Malik to listen to the traditions, he opened his record book saying that it contained those traditions which he had noted down after having heard them from the Prophet." ³

Again, we come across the following tradition in the Book of Imam Bukhari : " In the year of the Conquest of Mecca, when a certain man of the Khuza tribe killed a person in the Haram, the Prophet, riding on a camel, delivered a sermon. A certain man of Yemen (Abu Shah) requested the Prophet to get the sermon written for him, and he caused it to be written accordingly." ⁴

In the face of such irresistible evidence does it become a learned scholar, such as Professor D. S. Margoliouth, to insist on his contention that writing was forbidden or dis-

¹ Bokhari, Chapter on Knowledge.

² Abu Dawood, Vol. II.

³ Taq'id-ul-'Ilm.

⁴ Bukhari, Chapter on Writing of Knowledge. These traditions have been quoted from "Sirat-un-Nabi," Vol. I, by Shibli Nomaní.

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couraged by the Prophet of Islam ? The fact, apparently, is that the Prophet might have forbidden the writing of his tradition in the very early period of Islam, since there was some possible apprehension that uncultured Arabs might misunderstand and misinterpret him ; but, that when, as a result of close contact between him and his Companions, that apprehension disappeared, he cancelled his prohibitory order, as is clearly established by the traditions quoted above.

The most convincing and inspiring evidence of the Prophet's encouragement of learning is furnished by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal in his Tradition Book, and corroborated by other traditionalists. It runs :—

“ Captives of the war of Badr who could not pay their ransom owing to poverty were let off, but those among them who knew the art of writing were ordered to teach the art to the Muslim boys. Each prisoner had to coach a batch of ten boys. Zaid b. Thabit learnt the art of writing in this way.”

Can the history of any nation in the world present such an example of devotion to or encouragement of learning ? It was this spirit and love of knowledge created by the Prophet in the hearts of his followers, which, later on, induced the great Abbaside Caliph, Mamun al-Rashid, to include among the terms of peace between the Muslims and the Romans a clause to the effect that a considerable number of scientific books of the famous library at Constantinople should be handed over to the victors for the purposes of research. The action of Caliph Mamun was but an echo of the noble example set by the Prophet two centuries earlier. The Prophet had a period of only twenty-three years at his disposal for the promulgation of his great Mission. Nearly the whole of that period, as every student

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knows, was encumbered by obstacles and hindrances thrown in his way by Unbelievers, and no stone was left unturned to intimidate him and render his task impossible. But in the midst of these hardships he did the best he could for the spread of education among his adherents.

At the outset the Holy Book itself invites the Believers to take to learning, when it says: "All Believers cannot travel up to Medina, so batches from different tribes should proceed there to acquire knowledge in religious matters and to warn their tribes when they return; they may, perhaps, avoid evil deeds."¹

In another place the Qur-án says: "If I consolidate some people in power on the earth, they offer prayers, give alms, command good acts and prohibit evil ones."²

In accordance with the above instructions Believers of different tribes and places thronged to the Prophet in large numbers to acquire knowledge in religious as well as worldly subjects, and since mosques, in those days, were the only public places for the delivery of sermons and lectures, Muslims used to assemble there and listen to the instructive speeches of the Prophet, some of them noting down the salient points of the lectures. The products of these seats of culture, unlike present day scholars, whose interest in studies ends, as a rule, simultaneously with the close of their academic career, took it as their bounden duty to educate, free of charge, those people, who, owing to poverty or some other obstacle, were not able to attend these equivalents of the modern university. When Malik son of Huvairath had finished his course of studies at Medina, the Prophet addressed him, saying, "Go back to your people and teach them and lead them aright; and offer prayers in the manner you have seen me praying here."³

¹ Sura 'Taubah'—Penitence.

² Sura 'Haj'—Pilgrimage.

³ Bukhari, Chapter on Mercy to Animals.

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This was the case with those Believers who lived outside Medina and had not migrated to that town. As regards the permanent and domiciled inhabitants of Medina, their system of education was more extensive in its scope and more far-reaching in its effect. In the Great Mosque of the Prophet there was a portico (*Suffa*) which was, to all intents and purposes, a permanent hall of learning and culture, where the residential scholars of the place devoted themselves heart and soul to the acquirement of knowledge bearing on the various problems of the day.

The importance attached to learning by the Prophet can be realized from the fact that once, on entering the Mosque, he saw the Believers divided into two groups, one occupied in devotions and meditation, and the other in literary discussions. The Prophet chose the latter and took his seat among them, adding ! " Both the groups are engaged in good work, but God has sent me as a teacher."¹

Anas son of Malik tells the following incident : " Seventy men from among the people of the portico (*As-háb-us-Suffa*) used to go to a teacher at night and keep themselves engaged in studies till the break of the dawn."²

Ubádah son of Samit says : " I coached a number of men of the portico in the Holy Book and the art of writing ; and one of them gave me a bow as a presentation."³

Abu Dawood says that the Prophet did not allow Ubádah to accept the present. This was a hint that teaching should be imparted without thought of remuneration.

¹ Ibn-i-Majah, Chapetr on Divine Decree ; also Mishkat.

² Ahmad bin Hanbal, Vol. III.

³ Bukhari, Vol. II. These traditions are quoted from " Sirat-un-Nabi," Vol. II.

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THE FÁTIHAH.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful.

(All) praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the Beneficient, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Requital, Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray.

The *Fátihah*, the *Opening*, the Chapter with which the Qur-án opens, is also known by various other names : the Seven Oft-repeated Verses, the Opening of the Book, the Chapter of Prayer, the Chapter of Supplication, the Basis of the Book, the Praise, the Thanksgiving, the Foundation, the Treasure, the Whole, the Sufficient, the Healer and the Healing.

The Chapter itself is really a summary of the whole Qur-án. It describes God's Attributes as being *Rab*, the Creator, Nourisher and Maintainer, of all the Worlds, as being the Beneficient, the Merciful and the Sole Judge of all rights and wrongs.

The prayer contained in the Chapter is the sublimest of all prayers that exist in any religion. The last three verses express an earnest desire of man's soul to walk in righteousness without erring on the wrong path. It makes the human soul aspire to the greatest spiritual eminence.

The *Fátihah* is repeated thirty-two times a day by every Muslim whether he offers his prayer in congregation or in private ; and as such it has a special importance. It brings home to every Muslim that his God is the Creator of all and His creatures are all equal. Further, it urges a Muslim to seek guidance for his right place in the kingdom of God which has come and not merely to pray for its coming.

K. S. MAHMUD.

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÁN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual, and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches, and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.